

NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Adopted by Synod Council – January 12, 2013

PERSONNEL PRACTICES

1. GENERAL

1.1 Scope

These practices shall be applicable to all persons in the employ of the Northern Great Lakes Synod. If there be any variance with the terms of a “Call” from the Church, the terms and conditions of the call shall have preferences.

1.2 Personnel Officer

The Bishop of the Synod shall be the Personnel Officer of the Church to administer these personnel practices unless he/she chooses to delegate portions of them.

1.3 Personnel Committee

The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall serve as the Personnel Committee. The Committee shall propose changes in these practices and shall have those responsibilities assigned to it by these practices and the Synod Council.

1.4 Rights of Employees

No rights or privileges shall accrue to any employee by reason of these policies which in any way limit or restrict the authority of the Synod Council to make amendments, corrections, additions or deletions to these personnel practices and the effective application thereof to all employees. The Synod Council may, upon recommendation of the Bishop, amend the job description of any employed position. All employees recognize that a Bishop may ask for the resignation of any or all employees.

1.5 Job Descriptions

The Synod Executive Committee will maintain job descriptions for all employees except the Bishop whose job description is in the Synod constitution.

1.6 Individual File

The Bishop or other employee, if so delegated, shall maintain an individual file for each employee containing employment application form, payroll authorizations, salary information, attendance records and other pertinent documents. Because of the confidential nature of these files, they shall be available only to authorized persons and employee upon request.

2. JOB CATEGORIES

2.1 Category I – Bishop, Executive Staff

Elected by Synod actions, or nominated by the Bishop subject to approval by the Synod Council.

2.2 Category II – Full-time Support Persons

Individuals employed to perform secretarial, clerical, or service functions on a full-time permanent basis. Full-time shall be considered 37.5 hours per week.

2.3 Category III – Support Persons, Part-time

Individuals employed to perform administrative, secretarial, clerical or service functions, including seasonal workers hired for a specific term for a specific task.

2.4 Category IV – Deployed Ministry Staff

Individuals employed for a specific ministry, either full-time or part-time. Such employees may or may not work out of the Synod office, and may be employed for a specific time period depending on the nature of and funding for the ministry.

3. EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

3.1 Introductory Period

Support persons shall be employed with the understanding that the first three months will be considered an introductory period. Should the work of the employee prove unsatisfactory at any time during that period, he/she may be discharged after payment of salary through the period actually worked, and he/she will not be entitled to termination salary.

3.2 Pre-employment Health Examinations

The employer may require and bear the costs of health examinations for all new employees.

3.3 Non-discrimination and Affirmative Action in Employment

It is the policy of the Synod to take affirmative action to achieve equal employment opportunity in all personnel actions and procedures including, but not limited to, recruitment, hiring, training, transfer, promotion, compensation, and other benefits.

This policy is to be administered without regard to race, color, national origin, age or sex, mental or physical handicap; except where sex, age, mental or physical handicap is a bonafide occupational qualification.

In all positions, an understanding of the spirit and purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is an asset in fulfilling the responsibilities of the position. Employment shall normally be given to persons who are active members of ELCA congregations.

4. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

4.1 Purpose

The regular review and appraisal of staff and support staff who work with the Synod is intended to provide support for the individual, to improve the performance of the individual by giving an objective and constructive assessment of the adequacy of his/her performance, to assist in the development of fulfillment of the individual's career or occupational goals, and to provide information for the salary recommendation process. It is a part of the ongoing process in which achievements are noted and the employee is counseled on further agreed upon steps necessary for consistently meeting requirements. The intent of this program is to contribute to the accomplishment of the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Northern Great Lakes Synod.

4.2 Appraisal Schedule

A performance appraisal interview shall be conducted at least annually between an employee and his/her supervisor. This review will occur in January or February of each year. The Bishop is responsible for this review.

5. COMPENSATION

5.1 Salary

The Synod Council shall establish salaries for all employees. The salary of each employee shall be reviewed regularly (usually annually) for merit increases/decreases. Salary review date shall be the end of the fiscal year or at the time of position reclassification with corresponding salary change.

5.2 Overtime

Category I employees shall not be paid for overtime work. When overtime work is authorized in writing for Category II and III employees, compensation will be paid based on the rate of one and one-half times the regular hourly rate of pay.

5.3 Meetings and Conventions

When employees are required to work at meetings, overtime shall be paid as prescribed above, including work performed on Saturday, Sunday or holidays that exceeds 37.5 hours per week.

The normal schedule of working hours may be revised by the employer to fit the needs of the meeting. Travel time during normal working hours shall be counted as work time.

5.4 Pay Periods

Normal pay periods shall be semi-monthly and payment shall be made on the 15th and last day of the month. If those dates fall on a non-working day, checks shall be issued on the working day last preceding it.

5.5 Termination Upon Death

In the event of the death of a full-time employee, salary shall be paid to a dependent surviving spouse through the month in which the death occurs, plus one additional month. Where no dependent spouse survives, payment to other surviving dependents shall not be made unless such is determined to be essential by the Bishop of the Synod and/or the Executive Committee of the Synod Council.

5.6 Housing Allowance

Ordained staff persons shall establish the amount of their housing allowance with the Synod Council in such a manner as to comply with the requirements of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

6. REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

6.1 Air

Regular coach or tourist fare when such are available to fit the itinerary.

6.2 Private Auto

When used in connection with Synod duties, current rates allowable by the Internal Revenue Service, plus toll and parking charges, shall be paid.

6.3 Rented Auto

Full charges allowed, provided that common carrier is not available to meet employee's itinerary requirements.

6.4 Leased Auto

Autos may be leased or purchased by the Synod for use by designated employees. The use, costs and expenses shall be those approved by the Synod Council from time to time as entered in the Council's minutes.

6.5 Hotel/Motel

Single occupancy in a first class unit shall be allowed at the lowest rate available.

6.6 Meals

Reimbursements for actual amounts expended, including gratuities, but not alcoholic beverages.

6.7 Gifts

When meals and/or room has been provided in a private home, the expense of a gift to the hostess/host, in a reasonable amount, shall be considered appropriate and reimbursable.

6.8 Meals for Guests

Meals for guests shall be reimbursed in reasonable amounts. Group meals shall require receipts and be charged to the appropriate account.

6.9 Telephone

Reimbursement to be made for business calls while traveling, and for toll charges incurred on behalf of the Synod on his/her home telephone.

6.10 Accounting

All expenses shall be accounted for at least monthly, unless an extended itinerary makes this impossible. Receipts for all reimbursement requests are required. These receipts for travel, room, board, registrations and other expenses are to be attached to the reimbursement form. Synod credit cards shall not be used for employee personal expenses. Excessive charges shall be brought to the attention of the Personnel Officer.

7. WORKING HOURS AND HOLIDAYS

7.1 Office Hours

Normal office hours of the Synod shall be 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET Monday through Friday. Staff employees shall organize their time schedules within the limits of the effective performance of their duties subject to the approval of the Bishop.

Support staff schedules shall normally be on a basis of 7.5 hours per day, with at least one-half hour for lunch, Monday through Friday. Each employee shall have an unpaid lunch time each day.

7.2 Overtime Reports

When an employee works overtime, as authorized by the Bishop or the Assistant to the Bishop prior to the time worked, an overtime report shall be prepared by the employee and submitted to the supervisor immediately following the week worked. The Synod will provide overtime report forms.

7.3 Holidays

The office shall be closed on the following days:

New Year's Day	Good Friday
Memorial Day	Independence Day
Labor Day	Thanksgiving Day
The day after Thanksgiving	Christmas Eve Day
Christmas Day	

7.4 Floating Holidays

All employees shall be entitled to two floating holidays in addition to those noted in 7.3. Request of such shall be in writing and in consultation with the Bishop in advance on a form provided by the Synod. Adequate support staff may be maintained at all times when the office is open.

7.5 Holidays on Saturday or Sunday

When one of the holidays in 7.3 falls on a Saturday, the office shall be closed the preceding day. If the holiday falls on Sunday, the office shall be closed on the following day.

7.6 Closing for Bad Weather

In the event of extremely inclement or hazardous weather, the office may be closed. The Bishop, or in his/her absence, the Assistant to the Bishop, shall determine when the office shall be closed under these conditions. If neither is available, Secretary I shall make the determination.

8. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

8.1 Resettlement Expenses

The Synod shall pay moving expenses of a Category I employee when one is required to change his/her place of residence upon being employed. Employee shall also be allowed actual round trip travel expenses for himself/herself and family for the purposes of finding a home.

8.2 Workers' Compensation Insurance

The employer shall provide, without cost to the employee, such worker's insurance as may be required under the statutes of the states in which personnel are employed.

8.3 Pension and Other Benefits Program

All full-time Synod employees, which would be those employees designated as Category I, II, III and some Category IV employees, shall be provided the ELCA regular pension plan, medical and dental benefits plan, disability benefits plan, and survivor benefits plan. The definition of full-time employees and benefits which an employee shall receive pursuant to said plans shall be controlled by the ELCA Board of Pensions.

8.4 Social Security

The employer shall make contributions required of employers under the Social Security Act for its employees. Employees shall have deducted from their paychecks the appropriate percentage for Social Security and it shall be paid to Social Security as required. Employees for whom the employer is not permitted by law to make direct payments of Social Security taxes, either of the employee or the employer, shall receive an allowance in the amount that would be paid by the employer.

8.5 Travel Accident Insurance

The employer shall provide Category I employees with additional death or dismemberment coverage as established by the Synod Council.

9. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

9.1 Procedures

Participation in staff development opportunities shall be arranged by a Category I employee and the Executive Committee on the basis of agreement on the individual's developmental needs, goals, and a continuous program. Evaluation of progress shall be made annually.

10. TIME OFF FROM WORK

10.1 Vacation and Paid Leave Computation

Employees shall be allowed vacation and paid leave annually, computed as of December 31 in the following manner:

Category I – Five weeks

All Other Employees – Ten working days of vacation each year during the first four years; fifteen working days of vacation each year during years five through eight; one extra day for each year thereafter, to a maximum of 25 days each year. Employees who have previously served shall receive credit for years of service.

Holidays which occur during the vacation period will not count as vacation days. Vacation days for employees may be taken in any increments agreed upon in advance with the Bishop.

10.2 Unused Vacation

Vacation time may not be carried over to succeeding years, except under extenuating circumstances and exception granted in writing by the Executive Committee. Vacation not used at time of separation shall be given to the employee as salary.

10.3 Scheduling of Vacation, Continuing Education and Leave Time

The work requirements of the employer shall ordinarily be the prime consideration in scheduling one's leave time. Employee's seniority and personal preference, in that order, shall be the secondary governing factors. Vacation time requests shall be submitted in writing to the Bishop or his designee at least 45 days before the requested vacation time begins. The Bishop shall have one week to approve or deny vacation time requests.

10.4 Time Off for Medical Reasons and Disability Benefits

All full-time and half-time employees shall be provided the ELCA Disability Benefits Plan. During the first two months of disability, the employer shall continue full salary. The benefits following the first two months of disability shall be as provided for by the ELCA Disability Benefits plan. Time off for medical reasons which are not totally disabling, including pregnancy, with full salary shall be set at the rate of twelve working days per calendar year commencing January 1. An employee is eligible for one sick-leave day for each month worked.

Unused medical sick-leave shall be accumulated from year-to-year subject to restrictions of accumulation specified below. Unused medical sick-leave shall be accumulated up to 72 days. An employee shall not have the privilege of using accumulated sick-leave for any purpose other than illness or conditions described below. At time of termination of service, an employee shall have no claim to pay in lieu of unused medical sick-leave. Parental leave will follow the current ELCA policy.

When it is necessary for an employee to have dental or medical attention during regular working hours, the time taken shall be charged against available medical leave.

Upon the request of the Bishop, an employee who is absent for medical reasons shall be required to furnish medical certification of disability and, upon return to work, a physician's certificate that said employee is physically able to return to his/her normal duties or if duties must be restricted, the extent of the restriction shall be indicated.

When an employee is required to remain at home to care for a member of the family who is ill, such time shall be charged to medical leave.

In the event of a death in the immediate family (spouse, sibling, child, parent, sibling-in-law, step-child, step-parent or parent-in-law), an employee shall be allowed leave with pay, not to exceed three working days. In other emergency situations, leave with pay may be granted by the Executive Committee for a reasonable period.

10.5 Jury Duty

An employee required to serve on a jury shall be entitled to full pay during a period of such service, and employees shall be permitted to retain fees received, except that in cases of service beyond two weeks in any twelve-month period, the fee received shall be used as an offset against regular compensation.

10.6 Leave

Leave without pay may be granted to any employee for personal reasons after due consideration has been given to the work requirements of the position.

11. SEPARATION AND RETIREMENT

11.1 Discharge of Ordained Ministers

Discharge of ordained ministers shall be in accordance with the constitution of the Northern Great Lakes Synod.

11.2 Discharge of Other Employees

An employee may be terminated at the discretion of the Bishop of the Synod by payment of termination salary (11.3) except that if discharge is for cause, no termination salary shall be given. Introductory employees shall be discharged without termination salary.

11.3 Termination Salary

Under ordinary circumstances, termination salary shall be two weeks pay.

11.4 Resignation

Ordinarily, Category I employees shall be expected to give not less than two months notice of resignation.

Category II, III, and IV employees shall be expected to give not less than two weeks notice. No termination salary shall be paid upon resignation.

NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Personnel Severance Benefits Policy

Adopted by Synod Council – March 11, 2017

PURPOSE

These severance benefits are to be understood as providing support during the transition time prior to another call or employment. Severance benefits are not extended beyond such time when the individual begins work under call or finds other employment. Responsibility for notification of a call or other employment rests with the severance benefits recipient.

ELIGIBLE PERSONS

The persons eligible for these benefits are:

- Serving Synod Bishop
- Serving Assistants to the Bishop
- Current Office Secretaries

and whose office or employment by the synod was involuntarily terminated due to action of the synod by non-election of the incumbent synodical bishop, budget restraints, change of position functions, or resignation upon request of a newly elected bishop.

Disability is not covered under these provisions, since disability is covered under the provisions of the Disability Benefits Plan of Portico Benefits Services.

Persons planning retirement and, therefore, voluntarily declining election or appointment, are not eligible for these severance benefits.

Eligible persons will be hereinafter referred to as severance benefits recipients.

EFFECTIVE DATE

The date this severance benefits policy shall be effective is the date of adoption by the Synod Council.

BENEFITS

The severance benefits shall:

- Be effective for the severance benefits recipient who has served at least one full term as bishop or, who has served for at least one year in their position at the time of termination.

- Begin upon vacating the synodical office or position and following the period covered by unused vacation time earned during the twelve months prior to termination.
- Be paid on the benefits recipient's regular pay periods.
- Be three months of benefits.

AMOUNT OF BENEFITS

Benefits recipients will receive:

- Current monthly compensation (salary, housing, and FICA reimbursement, if applicable).
- Participation in Portico Benefits Services: pensions at the designated rate, Survivor Benefits Plan, Major Medical/Dental Benefits Plan, and Disability Benefits Plan for the months of severance benefits.

Following the expiration of the severance benefits, benefits recipients may retain their participation in the Survivor Benefits, Major Medical and Dental Plan, and Disability Plan at their own expense according to the provisions of the applicable plans. Solely for the purpose of determining rights to continue benefits under those plans, the benefits recipient's termination or call/employment will be deemed to occur on the date severance benefits cease.

DISPOSITION

In case of a difference of opinion in interpretation of the Severance benefits Policy, the Synod Council will make the final disposition.